

# FALL ENROLLMENT REPORT 2011



**COMMUNITY COLLEGES**  
BUREAU OF ADULT, CAREER, AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATION  
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## Helping Communities Meet the Learning Needs of all Their Children and Adults

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## Executive Summary

The Iowa Department of Education collects enrollment information from all 15 community colleges on the 10th business day of the fall semester. This report summarizes several aspects of community college enrollment. Some of the highlights of this report are:

- Enrollment fell 0.59—622 students—to 105,975—the first fall-to-fall enrollment decline since 1994 (Figure 1).
- Enrollment fell at nine of the 15 community colleges (Table 1).
- Part-time students comprised 51.8 percent of fall enrollment, compared to 49.5 percent in 2010. Part-time enrollment has comprised the majority of students three times in the modern community college history—all within the past six years (Table 1).
- Credit hours fell two percent to 1,006,097.85, and fell at 10 of the 15 community colleges (Table 3).
- Females still comprise 55 percent of fall enrollees, while the average age of all students was still 23 years old (Figure 2 & 3).
- College parallel remained the largest program type in community colleges with 62 percent of students, career and technical education (CTE) enrollment fell 3.4 percent (Figure 6).
- A total of 29,304 students were enrolled in online courses this fall, 25.9 percent of student enrollment (Table 4).
- Health science programs remained the largest CTE major, followed by manufacturing and business management and administration (Figure 7).
- Joint enrollment fell 1.9 percent—519 students—to 27,437 students. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of which were enrolled in contractual agreements (Table 5).
- Enrollment is projected to increase 4.5 percent to 110,749 students as the economy is expected to recover at a slow pace (Table 6).

### About this Report

This report summarizes fall enrollment in Iowa's community colleges. Every year, Iowa's 15 community college districts submit data on the 10th business day of the fall semester.

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## Fall Enrollment

Fall enrollment fell to 105,975 students, a 0.59 percent decline since last fall. Since 2008, community college enrollment has grown at a rapid pace, which was likely due to the 2008-09 recession. The decline this year follows enrollment increases of 14.3 and 5.9 percent in the past two years.

Enrollment declines are rare in the history of Iowa's modern community college system—dating back to the fall of 1965. Including the most recent data, enrollment has fallen five times since 1965: 1976; 1984; 1985; 1994; and 2011 (Figure 1).

It is common for community college enrollment to be countercyclical. After the second-largest enrollment increase in 2009 of 14.3 percent and subsequent increase in 2010 of 5.9 percent, enrollment forecasts projected an enrollment decline for this year (Iowa Department of Education, 2010).

Enrollment fell at nine of the 15 community colleges in contrast to last year where enrollment fell at three of the community colleges. Part-time enrollment (12 credits or less) now exceeds full-time enrollment again. Part-time enrollees comprised 51.8 percent of total enrollment compared to 49.5 percent last year (Table 1). The number of full-time students fell from 53,883 students to 51,107, while part-time students grew

- Enrollment fell 0.59 percent to 105,975 students—the first decline since 1994.
- Enrollment at nine of 15 community colleges declined.
- Full-time students declined, while part-time students grew to 51.8 percent of enrollees.

from 52,714 to 54,868 students.

A majority of part-time enrollees is only a recent phenomena beginning in 2008; however, full- and part-time enrollment has jockeyed for over 50 percent of students since then. Although it is a relatively new phenomenon at Iowa's community colleges, national data indicates that part-time enrollees have outnumbered full-time enrollees at community colleges since the early 1970s (Snyder & Dillow, 2011: Table 204).

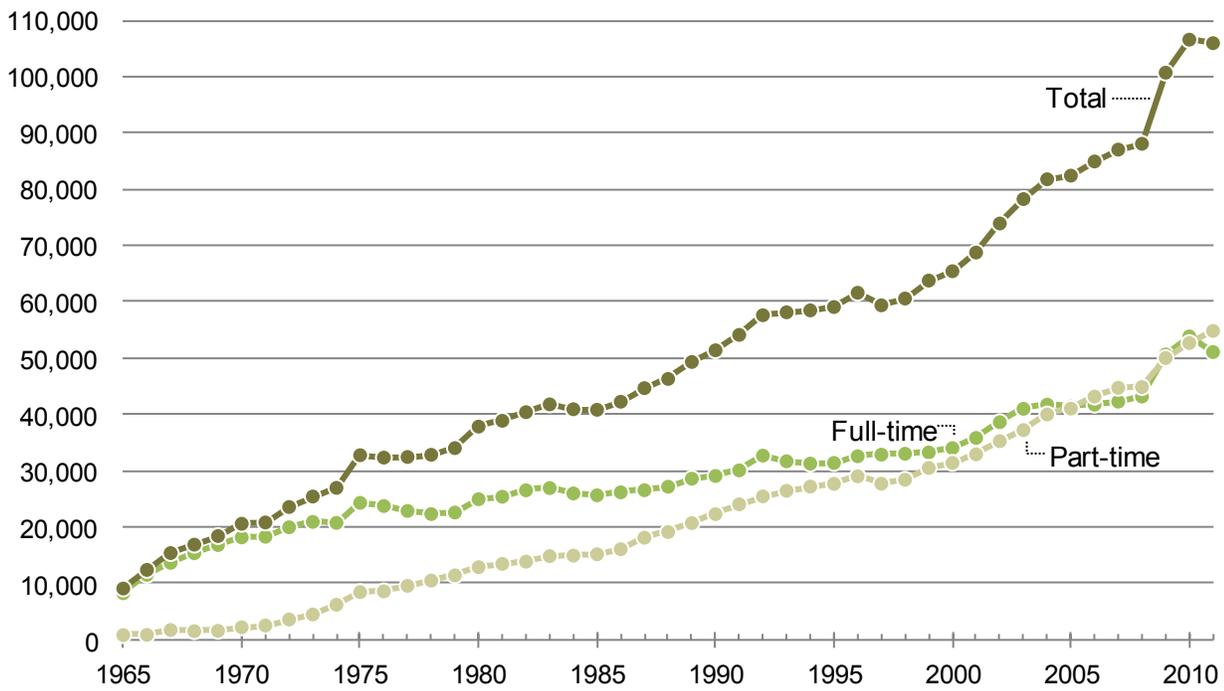
The remainder of this report will break down credit enrollment by credit hours, student demographics, the programs in which students are enrolled, online enrollment, joint enrollment, and enrollment projections.

**Table 1 – Fall Enrollment by College and Attendance Status: 2011**

| College           | Attendance Status |               |                | One-Year Change |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
|                   | Full-Time         | Part-Time     | Total          |                 |
| Northeast         | 2,195             | 2,858         | 5,053          | -1.6%           |
| North Iowa Area   | 1,903             | 1,654         | 3,557          | -5.3%           |
| Iowa Lakes        | 1,770             | 1,488         | 3,258          | -6.6%           |
| Northwest Iowa    | 727               | 817           | 1,544          | -6.7%           |
| Iowa Central      | 3,492             | 2,806         | 6,298          | 1.5%            |
| Iowa Valley       | 1,795             | 1,259         | 3,054          | -3.3%           |
| Hawkeye           | 3,551             | 2,687         | 6,238          | -6.8%           |
| Eastern Iowa      | 4,125             | 5,714         | 9,839          | 4.8%            |
| Kirkwood          | 9,129             | 8,481         | 17,610         | -4.8%           |
| Des Moines Area   | 9,508             | 15,917        | 25,425         | 3.0%            |
| Western Iowa Tech | 3,083             | 3,704         | 6,787          | 5.4%            |
| Iowa Western      | 4,071             | 3,105         | 7,176          | 5.3%            |
| Southwestern      | 876               | 886           | 1,762          | 0.5%            |
| Indian Hills      | 3,085             | 1,948         | 5,033          | -9.7%           |
| Southeastern      | 1,797             | 1,544         | 3,341          | -7.8%           |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>51,107</b>     | <b>54,868</b> | <b>105,975</b> | <b>-0.6%</b>    |

Note: Students enrolled in 12 or more credit hours are counted as full-time. Each "|" denotes 5,000 credit hours.

**Figure 1 – Fall Enrollment by Status: 1965-2011**



| Year | Full-Time | Part-Time | Total  | Year | Full-Time | Part-Time | Total   |
|------|-----------|-----------|--------|------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| 1965 | 8,269     | 841       | 9,110  | 1989 | 28,614    | 20,737    | 49,351  |
| 1966 | 11,541    | 878       | 12,419 | 1990 | 29,102    | 22,326    | 51,428  |
| 1967 | 13,667    | 1,744     | 15,411 | 1991 | 30,095    | 24,065    | 54,160  |
| 1968 | 15,373    | 1,533     | 16,906 | 1992 | 32,715    | 25,477    | 57,652  |
| 1969 | 16,831    | 1,596     | 18,427 | 1993 | 31,711    | 26,462    | 58,173  |
| 1970 | 18,188    | 2,221     | 20,609 | 1994 | 31,297    | 27,217    | 58,514  |
| 1971 | 18,309    | 2,535     | 20,844 | 1995 | 31,417    | 27,694    | 59,111  |
| 1972 | 19,984    | 3,606     | 23,590 | 1996 | 32,602    | 29,040    | 61,642  |
| 1973 | 20,952    | 4,500     | 25,452 | 1997 | 32,889    | 27,731    | 59,414  |
| 1974 | 20,770    | 6,222     | 26,992 | 1998 | 33,048    | 28,431    | 60,620  |
| 1975 | 24,324    | 8,468     | 32,792 | 1999 | 33,283    | 30,526    | 63,809  |
| 1976 | 23,762    | 8,602     | 32,364 | 2000 | 34,047    | 31,426    | 65,473  |
| 1977 | 22,888    | 9,589     | 32,477 | 2001 | 35,857    | 32,933    | 68,790  |
| 1978 | 22,337    | 10,523    | 32,860 | 2002 | 38,660    | 35,287    | 73,947  |
| 1979 | 22,610    | 11,441    | 34,051 | 2003 | 41,028    | 37,253    | 78,281  |
| 1980 | 24,972    | 12,897    | 37,869 | 2004 | 41,778    | 40,025    | 81,803  |
| 1981 | 25,416    | 13,484    | 38,900 | 2005 | 41,435    | 41,064    | 82,449  |
| 1982 | 26,551    | 13,881    | 40,432 | 2006 | 41,759    | 43,202    | 84,961  |
| 1983 | 26,957    | 14,863    | 41,820 | 2007 | 42,307    | 44,765    | 87,072  |
| 1984 | 25,999    | 14,954    | 40,953 | 2008 | 43,209    | 44,895    | 88,104  |
| 1985 | 25,667    | 15,191    | 40,858 | 2009 | 50,683    | 50,053    | 100,736 |
| 1986 | 26,195    | 16,095    | 42,290 | 2010 | 53,883    | 52,714    | 106,597 |
| 1987 | 26,571    | 18,132    | 44,703 | 2011 | 51,107    | 54,868    | 105,975 |
| 1988 | 27,192    | 19,144    | 46,336 |      |           |           |         |

Sources: Iowa Department of Education, Area College and Community College Fall Term Enrollment Reports, except 1997-1999 where data was drawn from the Iowa College and University Enrollment Report prepared by Jerald Dallam of the University of Iowa.

## Credit Hours

The decline of total enrollment and the increase in part-time students has led to a decline in credit hours. The number of credit hours has fallen to 1,006,097.85—a two percent decline since last year (Table 3).

There is a clear link between the number of students enrolled and credit hours. However, the increase in the number of part-time students also indicates that the students who are attending community colleges this fall are enrolled in fewer hours. In fall 2011, students enrolled in an average of 9.49 credit hours, compared to 9.63 credit hours in 2010 and 9.59 credit hours in 2009 (Table 2). Full-time students, however, are taking the approximately same course loads, averaging 13.7 credit hours this

- Students enrolled in 1,006,097.85 credit hours this fall.
- Credit hours fell two percent since last year.
- Average credit hours per student fell to 9.49 per student.

fall.

Each credit hour represented at least 800 minutes of scheduled work for a classroom course; at least 1,600 minutes for a laboratory course; at least 2,400 minutes for clinical work; and at least 3,200 minutes of work experience. Typically, classes at community colleges vary between three and six credit hours. A full-time student must take at least 12 credit hours a semester, which is at least 9,600 classroom hours a semester.

**Table 2 – Average Credit Hours**

| Fiscal Year | Average Credit Hours per Student |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 2007        | 9.46                             |
| 2008        | 9.51                             |
| 2009        | 9.59                             |
| 2010        | 9.63                             |
| 2011        | 9.49                             |

**Table 3 – Fall Credit Hours by College and Attendance Status: 2011**

| College           | Attendance Status |                |                  | One-year Change |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
|                   | Full-Time         | Part-Time      | Total            |                 |
| Northeast         | 30,992            | 16,124         | 47,116           | -6.5%           |
| North Iowa Area   | 27,170            | 8,991          | 36,161           | -4.3%           |
| Iowa Lakes        | 26,858            | 8,062          | 34,920           | -11.7%          |
| Northwest Iowa    | 11,272            | 4,018          | 15,290           | -6.2%           |
| Iowa Central      | 51,014            | 14,452         | 65,466           | 2.1%            |
| Iowa Valley       | 25,620            | 7,114          | 32,733           | -6.6%           |
| Hawkeye           | 49,425            | 15,877         | 65,302           | -5.6%           |
| Eastern Iowa      | 55,002            | 32,323         | 87,325           | 2.3%            |
| Kirkwood          | 125,159           | 49,752         | 174,911          | -5.6%           |
| Des Moines Area   | 126,419           | 91,421         | 217,840          | 2.8%            |
| Western Iowa Tech | 42,355            | 20,170         | 62,525           | 3.0%            |
| Iowa Western      | 57,619            | 18,312         | 75,930           | 3.4%            |
| Southwestern      | 12,700            | 5,010          | 17,710           | -0.5%           |
| Indian Hills      | 30,829            | 8,128          | 38,957           | -12.8%          |
| Southeastern      | 25,065            | 8,851          | 33,915           | -10.8%          |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>697,495</b>    | <b>308,603</b> | <b>1,006,098</b> | <b>-2.0%</b>    |

Note: Students enrolled in 12 or more credit hours are counted as full-time. Each "I" denotes 1,000 students.

## Student Demographics

Fifty-five percent (55%) of students were female (Figure 2). Female enrollment is consistent with state and national trends in community colleges and four-year colleges (Snyder & Dillow, 2011: Table 204).

Females have outnumbered males nationally in higher education since 1980. In Iowa, females have outnumbered males since the Iowa Department of Education began collecting data in 1998.

Figure 3 shows the distribution of ages enrolled in colleges. The average age was unchanged at 23 years old, but the median age grew from 19 years old to 20 years old, consistent with national data (Snyder & Dillow, 2011: Table 201). Thus, half of Iowa community college students are still teenagers.

Iowa community college students are younger than the national average for community colleges. Seventy-two percent of students are traditional-age students under 25 years old. Nationally, 60 percent of students in public two-year colleges are traditional-age students (Snyder & Dillow, 2011: Table 201).

There is also a higher percentage of minorities in community colleges than in the state population. The recent decennial census estimates 11 percent of Iowans are non-white (U.S. Census Bureau 2011). This fall, 16 percent of students reporting a race are minorities, a substantial increase over last year which consisted of 14.5 percent minorities (Figure 4). Community colleges typically serve a higher proportion of

- Fifty-five percent (55%) of community college enrollees were female.
- The average age of community college students was 23 years-old, half were under 20.
- Over 85 percent of students in community colleges were white.

minorities, but direct national

comparisons are difficult since many other states are significantly more diverse in racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Black students were the second largest racial/ethnic group (seven percent), followed by Hispanic (five percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander (two percent). One percent (1%) indicated they were part of multiple racial and ethnic groups. The percentage of students identifying themselves as black or Hispanic increased this year, which contributed to the overall gain in minorities.

Almost 92 percent of students are residents of Iowa, which has been a common trend ever since the department started collecting data in 1998 (Figure 5). Seven percent (7 percent) were domestic out-of-state and less than one percent were international students.

**Figure 2 – Enrollment by Gender: 2011**

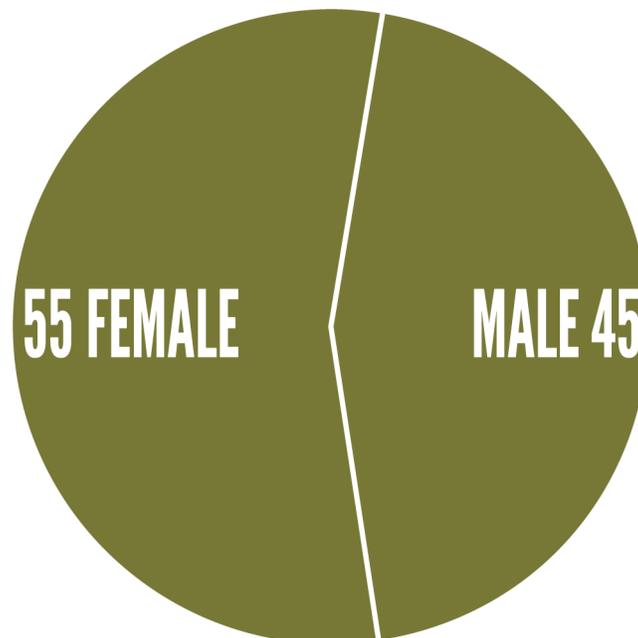
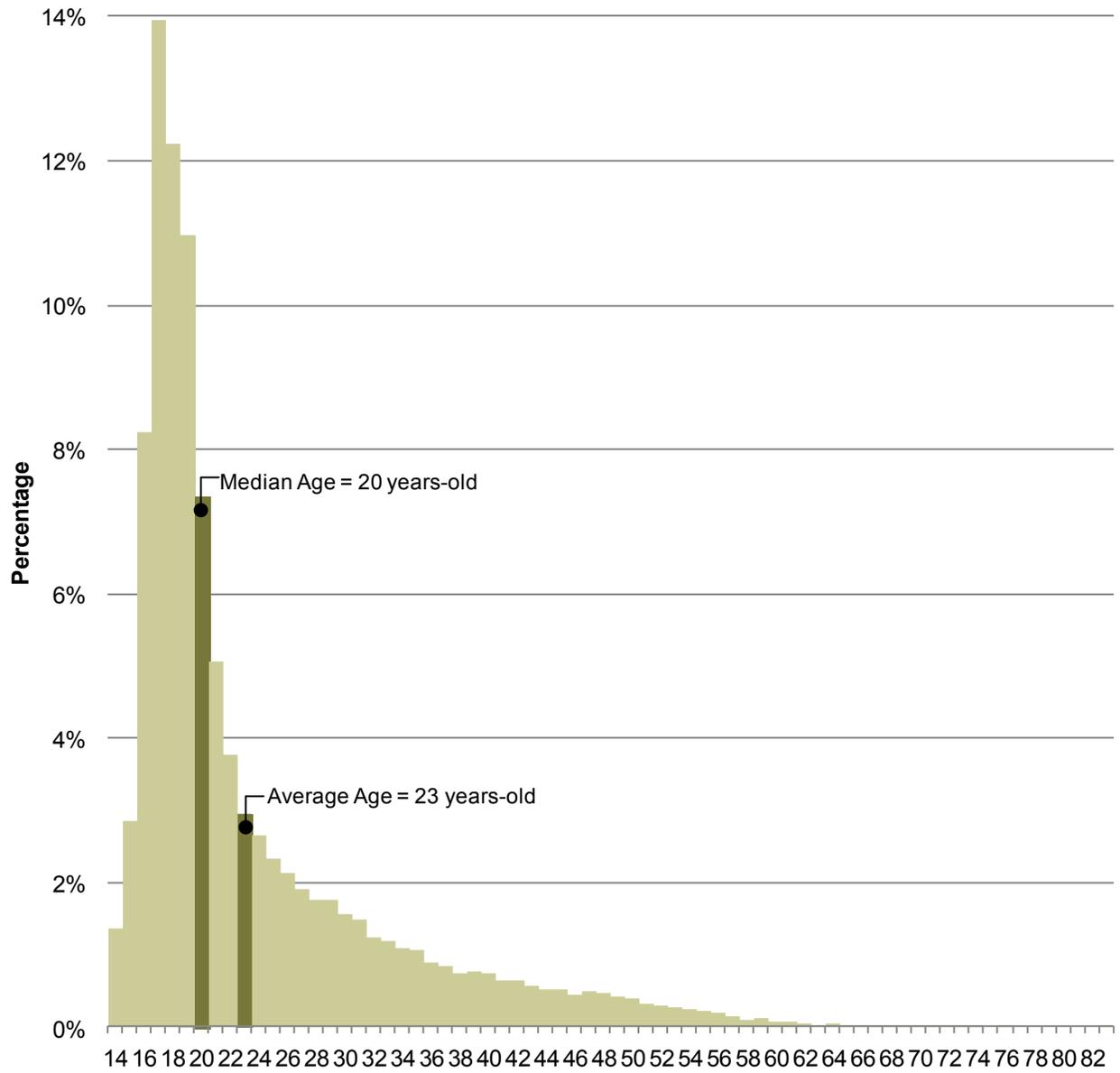
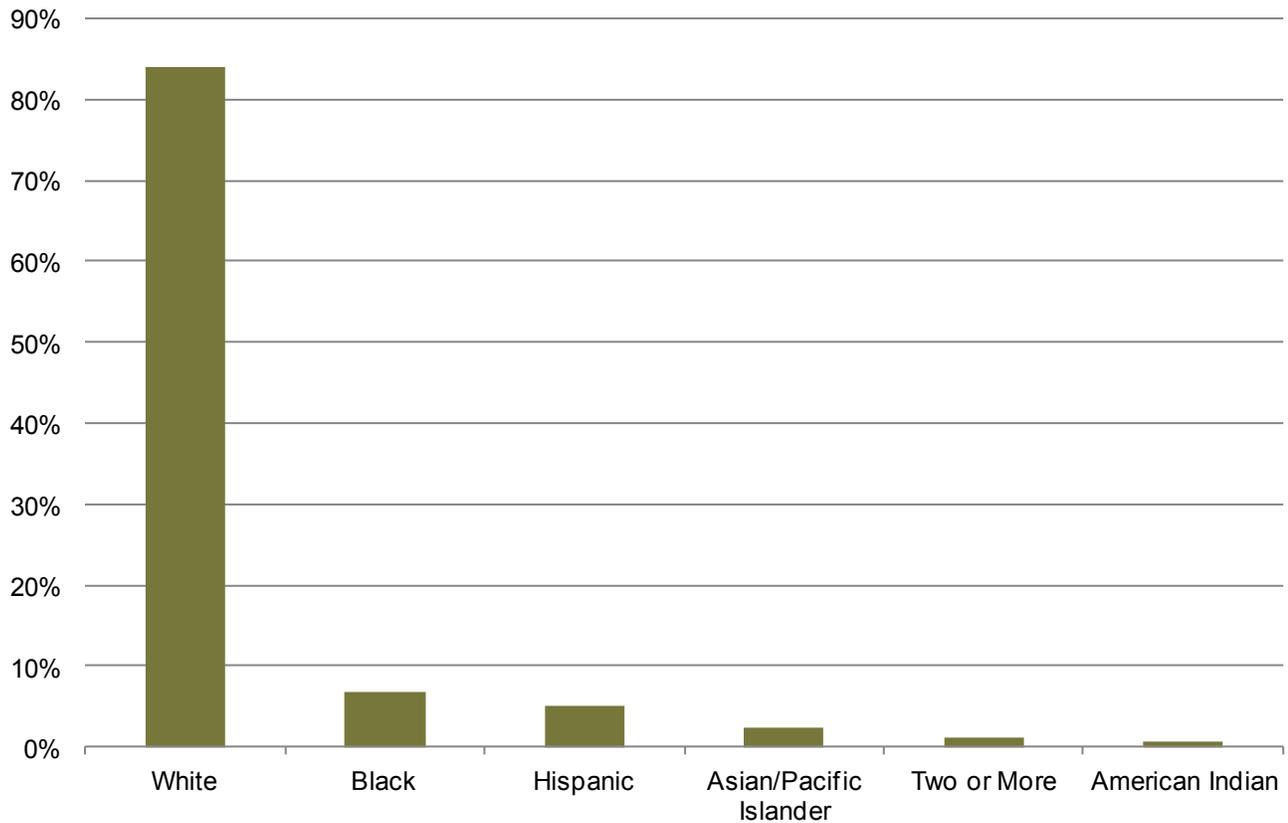


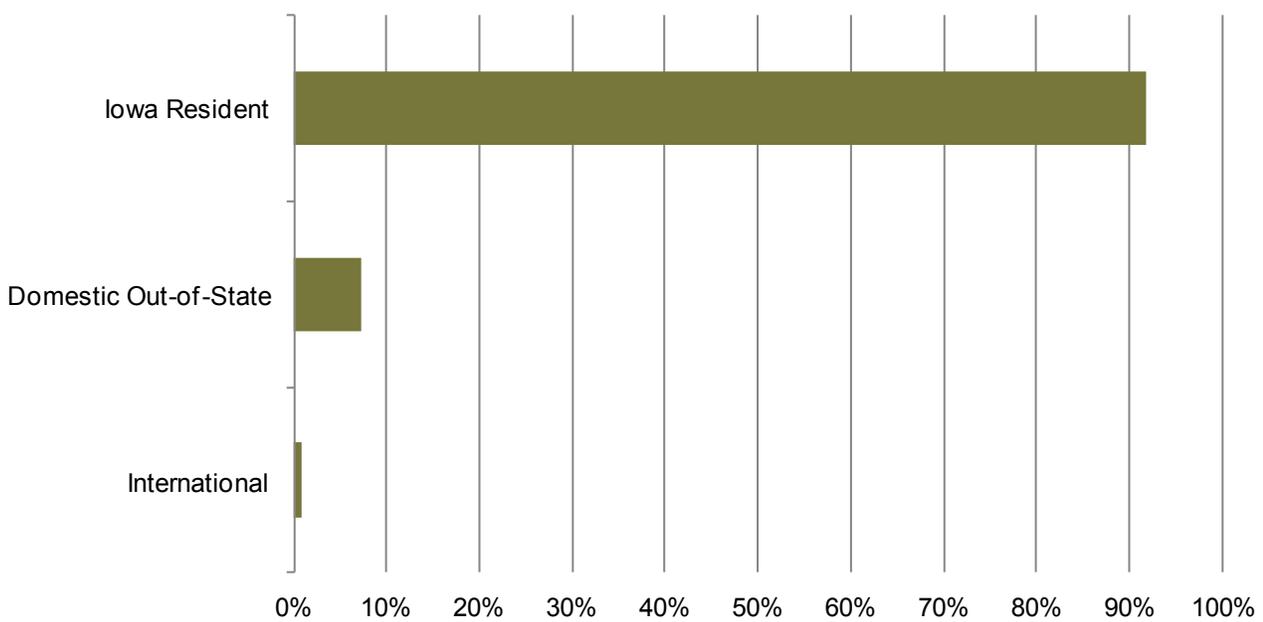
Figure 3 – Age Distribution: 2011



**Figure 4 – Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity: 2011**



**Figure 5 – Enrollment by Residency: 2011**



## Program Type

Community colleges offer several broad categories of programs:

- College parallel programs contain classes that articulate to a four-year university.
- Career option programs let students articulate to a four-year university or enter into a career field after graduation.
- Career and technical education (CTE) programs prepare students for the workforce.

College parallel programs are still the largest category of enrollment. Enrollment increased 1.3 percent to 67,950 students (Figure 6). Over 64 percent of students were enrolled in college parallel programs this past fall. College parallel programs have historically been the largest program type at Iowa's community colleges.

Enrollment in CTE programs fell to 32,553 students, a 3.4 percent decline. Thirty-one percent (31%) of community college students were enrolled in a CTE program. In the most recent nationwide estimates, at least 41 percent of enrollment in public two-year institutions were in CTE programs (Levesque et al. 2008).

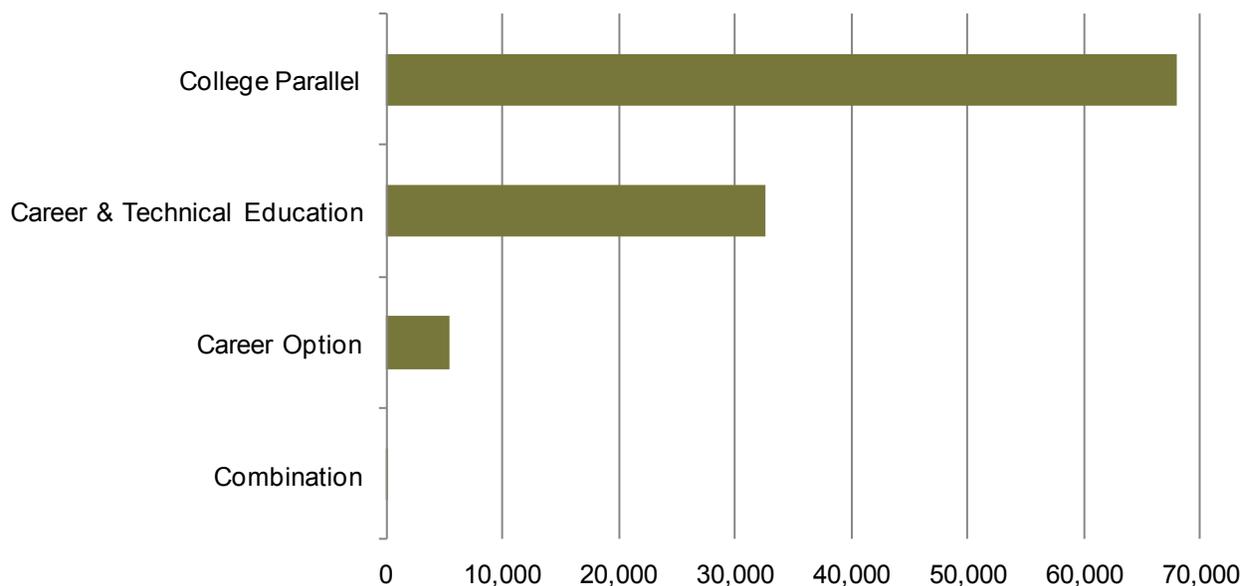
Career option programs grew for the second straight year after several years of decline. Career option grew to 5,439 students from 5,199—a growth of 4.6 percent.

Only 28 students enrolled in a combination of two or more of the categories mentioned above, which was a dramatic decline since last year. In fall 2010, 360 students were identified in

- College parallel is the largest program type with over 64 percent of all students.
- CTE enrollment fell 3.4 percent.
- Students enrolling in a combination of program types dropped substantially.

multiple program categories, indicating a 95.5 percent decline.

**Figure 6 – Enrollment by Program Type: 2010**



## Online Enrollment

A total of 29,304 students enrolled in online courses this fall (Table 4). Online enrollment comprised 28 percent of community college enrollment this fall. Online enrollment is considered to be a web-only class, where there is no face-to-face contact scheduled by the college.

Online enrollment comprised 27.7 percent of all students. Some colleges had nearly half of their fall enrollees enroll in at least one online course this fall.

However, many students only enrolled in a handful of credit hours in online courses. A total of 157,949 credit hours were for online classes this fall, almost 16 percent of all credit hours. On average, each student enrolled in 5.4 credit hours this fall. Typically, community college courses are three credit hours, which indicates average online enrollment is almost two courses this term.

- High school student enrollment grew 7.1 percent.
- 27,956 high school students are enrolled for college credit at Iowa’s community colleges.
- On average, students enroll in 5.6 credit hours.

**Table 4 – Online Enrollment by College: 2011**

| College           | Unduplicated Enrollment | Percent of All Students | Credit Hours   | Average Credit Hours per Student |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Northeast         | 1,686                   | 33.4%                   | 8,875          | 5.3                              |
| North Iowa Area   | 1,673                   | 47.0%                   | 5,117          | 3.1                              |
| Iowa Lakes        | 1,016                   | 31.2%                   | 6,053          | 6.0                              |
| Northwest Iowa    | 663                     | 42.9%                   | 3,482          | 5.3                              |
| Iowa Central      | 1,447                   | 23.0%                   | 6,968          | 4.8                              |
| Iowa Valley       | 1,183                   | 38.7%                   | 6,296          | 5.3                              |
| Hawkeye           | 1,170                   | 18.8%                   | 5,258          | 4.5                              |
| Eastern Iowa      | 3,240                   | 32.9%                   | 19,499         | 6.0                              |
| Kirkwood          | 3,483                   | 19.8%                   | 19,973         | 5.7                              |
| Des Moines Area   | 5,550                   | 21.8%                   | 31,592         | 5.7                              |
| Western Iowa Tech | 2,771                   | 40.8%                   | 16,121         | 5.8                              |
| Iowa Western      | 1,983                   | 27.6%                   | 11,520         | 5.8                              |
| Southwestern      | 877                     | 49.8%                   | 4,527          | 5.2                              |
| Indian Hills      | 1,390                   | 27.6%                   | 6,064          | 4.4                              |
| Southeastern      | 1,172                   | 35.1%                   | 6,604          | 5.6                              |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>29,304</b>           | <b>27.7%     </b>       | <b>157,949</b> | <b>5.4</b>                       |

Note: High school student includes Postsecondary Enrollment Option, contracted courses, and tuition paying students. For the student count, each "||" denotes 500 students; for percentage of all students, each "||" denotes 10 percent, for credit hours, each "||" denote 1,000 hours; finally, for average credit hours per student, each "||" denotes 0.25 hours.

## Career Clusters

The Iowa Department of Education reports CTE programs by the 16 career clusters. Each student major aligns to a career cluster with other similar programs. Page 13 lists all of the career clusters with a brief description. Information on career clusters can be obtained from [www.careerclusters.org](http://www.careerclusters.org).

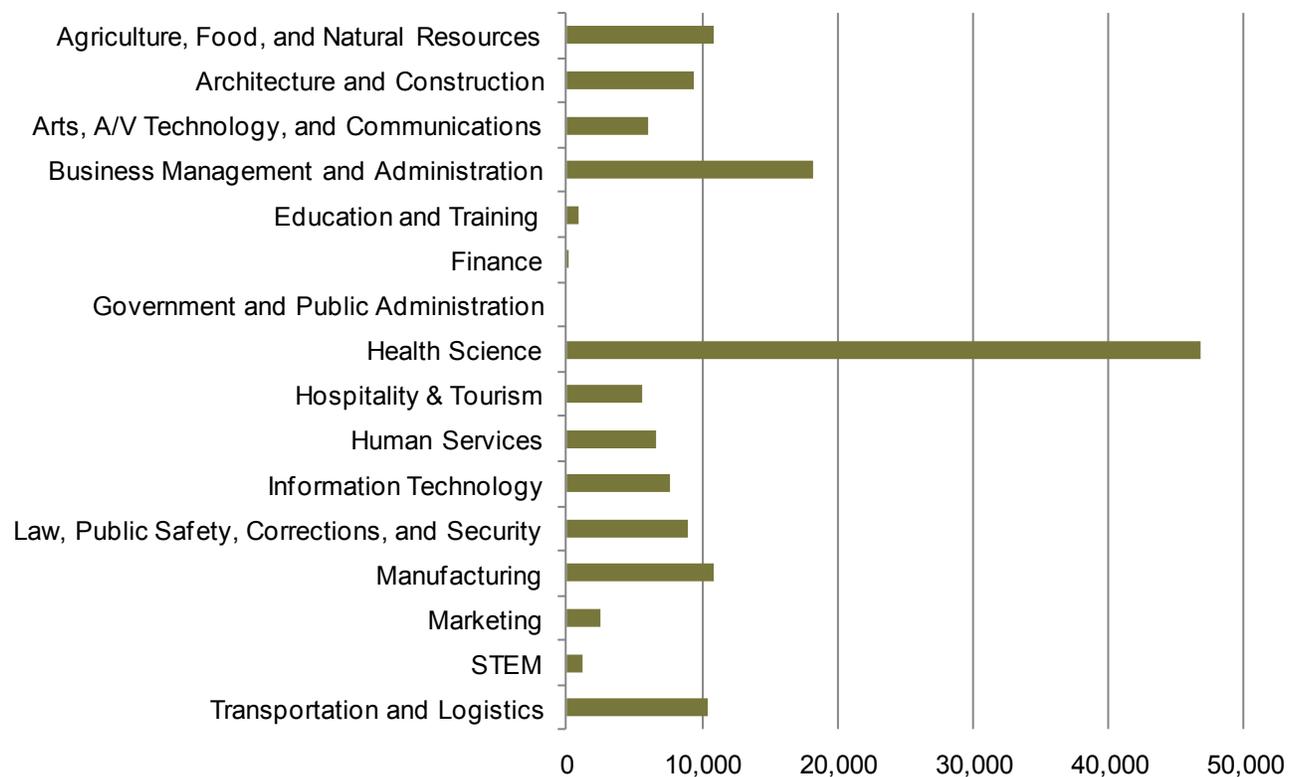
Enrollment in CTE programs can be broken down to specific areas of study. Health science remains the largest career cluster in the community colleges (13,685), followed by manufacturing (2,546), and then business management and administration (5,043) (Figure 7). Unfortunately, the U.S. Department of Education groups education programs by different standards so that national comparisons are not possible.

Health science enrollment fell six percent from 2010 to 2011. Business management and administration also fell by four percent since last year. Prior to the decline this year, both health and business majors more than doubled throughout the recession.

- Health science is the largest career cluster.
- Manufacturing is the second largest cluster followed by business management and administration.
- Enrollment in manufacturing gained since last year, but health and business fell.

However, manufacturing has reversed its recent enrollment decline and grew by 11 percent this year. Through the recession, the number of manufacturing majors fell as many of the jobs lost were in the manufacturing sector.

**Figure 7 – Enrollment by Career Clusters: 2011**





The production, processing, marketing, distribution, financing, and development of agricultural commodities and resources including food, fiber, wood products, natural resources, horticulture, and other plant and animal products/resources.



Careers in designing, planning, managing, building, and maintaining the built environment.



Designing, producing, exhibiting, performing, writing, and publishing multimedia content including visual and performing arts and design, journalism, and entertainment services.



Business, management and administration careers encompass planning, organizing, directing, and evaluating business functions essential to efficient and productive business operations.



Planning, managing, and providing education and training services, and related learning support services.



Planning, services for financial and investment planning, banking, insurance, and business financial management.



Executing governmental functions to include Governance; National Security; Foreign Service; Planning; Revenue and Taxation; Regulation; and Management and Administration at the local, state, and federal levels.



Planning, managing, and providing therapeutic services, diagnostic services, health informatics, support services, and biotechnology research and development.



Hospitality & Tourism encompasses the management, marketing and operations of restaurants and other foodservices, lodging, attractions, recreation events, and travel related services.



Preparing individuals for employment in career pathways that relate to families and human needs.



Building Linkages in IT Occupations Framework: for Entry Level, Technical, and Professional Careers Related to the Design, Development, Support and Management of Hardware, Software, Multimedia, and Systems Integration Services.



Planning, managing, and providing legal, public safety, protective services and homeland security, including professional and technical support services.



Planning, managing, and performing the processing of materials into intermediate or final products and related professional and technical support activities such as production planning and control, maintenance, and manufacturing/process engineering.



Planning, managing, and performing marketing activities to reach organizational objectives.



Planning, managing, and providing scientific research and professional and technical services including laboratory and testing services, and research and development services.



Planning, management, and movement of people, materials, and goods by road, pipeline, air, rail, and water and related professional and technical support services such as transportation infrastructure planning and management, logistics services, mobile equipment, and facility maintenance.

## Joint Enrollment

Community colleges offer joint enrollment options to high school students who can earn college credit toward a one- or two-year degree or transfer to a four-year college. There are several options for students, including Postsecondary Enrollment Option (PSEO), where a school district pays up to \$250 per course; contracted courses between high schools and community colleges, which often provide supplementary weighting; and an option for students to pay their own tuition for a community college course.

Joint enrollment fell two percent since last fall. Historically, joint enrollment has risen faster than the total community college population. This year, joint enrollment fell faster than the fall in overall enrollment.

Nevertheless, joint enrollment is a popular option for high school students in Iowa. Joint enrollees comprised 26 percent of community college students, which is consistent with last year. Nationally, the U.S. Department of Education estimated five percent of high school students jointly enroll in higher education while in high school (Kleiner and Lewis, 2005).

- Joint enrollment fell two percent since last fall.
- 27,437 high school students are enrolled for college credit at Iowa’s community colleges.
- On average, students enroll in 4.9 credit hours, a 0.7 decline since last year.

The Iowa Department of Education (2009) showed that joint enrollees tend to be either juniors or seniors in high school and, on average, do better on the ACT than students who did not jointly enroll.

**Table 5 – Joint Enrollment by College: 2011**

| College           | Unduplicated Enrollment | Percent of All Students | Credit Hours   | Average Credit Hours per Student |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Northeast         | 1,657                   | 32.8%                   | 7,986          | 4.8                              |
| North Iowa Area   | 945                     | 26.6%                   | 4,807          | 5.1                              |
| Iowa Lakes        | 988                     | 30.3%                   | 5,023          | 5.1                              |
| Northwest Iowa    | 524                     | 33.9%                   | 2,452          | 4.7                              |
| Iowa Central      | 2,201                   | 34.9%                   | 11,577         | 5.3                              |
| Iowa Valley       | 729                     | 23.9%                   | 3,752          | 5.1                              |
| Hawkeye           | 1,156                   | 18.5%                   | 5,689          | 4.9                              |
| Eastern Iowa      | 2,500                   | 25.4%                   | 11,450         | 4.6                              |
| Kirkwood          | 2,570                   | 14.6%                   | 11,122         | 4.3                              |
| Des Moines Area   | 7,968                   | 31.3%                   | 41,062         | 5.2                              |
| Western Iowa Tech | 2,126                   | 31.3%                   | 10,317         | 4.9                              |
| Iowa Western      | 1,589                   | 22.1%                   | 8,343          | 5.3                              |
| Southwestern      | 571                     | 32.4%                   | 3,032          | 5.3                              |
| Indian Hills      | 1,203                   | 23.9%                   | 5,052          | 4.2                              |
| Southeastern      | 710                     | 21.3%                   | 3,433          | 4.8                              |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>27,437</b>           | <b>25.9%  </b>          | <b>135,095</b> | <b>4.9      </b>                 |

Note: High school student includes Postsecondary Enrollment Option, contracted courses, and tuition paying students. For the student count, each "|" denotes 500 students; for percentage of all students, each "|" denotes 10 percent, for credit hours, each "|" denote 1,000 hours; finally, for average credit hours per student, each "|" denotes 0.25 hours.

## Enrollment Projections

The enrollment decline this year was consistent with the projected decline in enrollment for this year. Historical data has suggested enrollment will rapidly increase at community colleges during severe recessions and will temporarily fall once the economy recovers.

The 2008-09 recession sent enrollment into unprecedented levels. However, the economy is expected to slowly recover over the next four years. The Congressional Budget Office (2011) estimated the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) will increase between 1.7 to 2.6 percent over the next two years. Stronger economic growth—between 4.4 and 5 percent—is forecasted for 2014 and 2015.

Meanwhile, fewer students are still expected to graduate from high school through 2015 (Iowa Department of Education, 2011).

- Fall 2012 enrollment expected to climb 4.5% to 110,749.
- Enrollment forecasted to gain quickly for two years and then experience modest growth.

Despite the smaller number of students in the future education pipeline, community college enrollment is still forecasted to grow over the next four years. Fall 2012 enrollment is expected to grow 4.5 percent to 110,749 students. The low estimate for enrollment is to remain steady at 105,746 to a high estimate of 115,751 students. By 2014 and as the economy is anticipated to grow at a faster pace, enrollment growth is forecasted to flatten.

This is the fourth year of enrollment forecasts released by the Iowa Department of Education. Over this period, the margin of error (mean absolute percentage error, MAPE) between forecasted and actual enrollment was 3.9 percent. The margin of error for fall 2011 was 3 percent. Enrollment forecasts are based on estimates of high school enrollment, changes in GDP, and the Iowa unemployment rate. It does not include other important variables such as the economic value of community college education or changes in recruitment efforts.

**Table 6 – Projected Enrollment: 2012-2015**

| Year | Enrollment Forecast | Forecasted Growth | Low Estimate | High Estimate |
|------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 2012 | 110,749             | 4.5%              | 105,747      | 115,751       |
| 2013 | 116,286             | 5.0%              | 111,034      | 121,539       |
| 2014 | 119,516             | 2.8%              | 114,117      | 124,915       |
| 2015 | 121,831             | 1.9%              | 116,328      | 127,334       |

Note: Projections are based on previous year enrollment, high school enrollment, real U.S. gross domestic product (GDP), and Iowa unemployment rate.

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